

Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,
Building 137
(Quartermaster and Subsistence Office Storehouse)
Des Moines
Polk County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-121-BB

HABS
IDWA,
77-DESMO,
24-BB-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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Building No. 137. Quartermaster and Subsistence Storehouse

This structure consisted of a basic building unit, completed according to the Quartermaster General's plan 91D on October 29, 1903, at a cost of \$12,944.00, plus later additions built on either end. The addition on the east was constructed in 1905, while that on the west was finished on February 10, 1908, and cost \$9,331.00. The overall structure had brick walls, a gabled slate roof with returned eaves, and a rusticated limestone foundation. The brick was arranged in running bond joined with red-pigmented mortar. The building's original dimensions were 120 feet long by 32 feet wide. The east addition measured 100 feet by 32 feet, while that on the west measured 72 feet by 32 feet. Overall dimensions after the additions were built was 292 feet 6 inches by 32 feet. The east end of the building as finally completed had two double hung windows at the first floor level and two more at the attic level. This configuration was repeated at the west end.

The south side of the storehouse contained twenty-eight double hung windows and five doors, and the north side was substantially the same. A platform 5 feet 10 inches wide supported by piers and with steps at either end adjoined the building on the north side. All original windows and doors on the structure had 3-course segmental arches and the windows had limestone lug sills. In addition, a decorative corbeled stringcourse ran around the building below the soffit.

The first floor of the building stood about 5-3/4 feet above ground level. There were several grated single sash basement windows (installed in 1910) and coal chutes (1935) intervally spaced along the foundation walls. Basement entries were in the east and west ends. Five gabled dormers with projecting eaves graced the north side of the roof, while two were on the south side. Each dormer contained two 3-over-3-light double hung windows. In addition, there were two large end wall

chimneys, one at either end, plus four interior chimneys projecting at the ridge. Six ventilators also topped the ridge.

As of 1905, with completion of the east addition, the interior was arranged as follows:

Basement:

Room, 29' x 55' 8"
Room, 29' x 59' 8"
Addition: Room, 32' x 98' 11"

First floor:

Store room, 29' 10" x 36' 2"
Quartermaster office, 9' 7" x 14'
Commissary office, 9' 7" x 14'
Sales and issue room, 19' 9" x 19' 9"
Quartermaster clerk's room, 14' x 19' 9"
Store room, 20' x 29' 10"
Clothing and issue room, 25' x 29' 10"
Hall, 9' 7" x 6' 3"
Addition: room, 30' 6" x 40'
 room, 30' 6" x 58' 11"

Attic:

Room, 29' 10" x 56' 4"
Room, 29' 10" x 60' 5"
Addition: room, 32' x 98' 11"

As of the late 1930s, the interior of the building consisted of quartermaster and commissary facilities. Floors were of wood. Floor space for the first floor and attic totaled 16,515 square feet, while that for the basement encompassed 7,563 square feet. The interior was divided as follows:

Basement:

General supplies storeroom, 29' 2" x 98' 2"
General supplies storeroom, 29' 10" x 59' 6"
Subsistence storeroom, 28' 10" x 53' 6"
Subsistence storeroom, 28' 10" x 55' 8"
Furnace room, 28' 10" x 17'

First floor:

Clothing storeroom, 29' 6" x 98' 9"
Quartermaster office, 29' 4" x 60' 2"
Subsistence office, 23' 3" x 12' 6"
Meat storeroom, 23' 3" x 16' 10"
Subsistence salesroom, 29' 6" x 26' 9"
Subsistence storeroom, 29' 6" x 72'

Attic:

Clothing storeroom, 29' 6" x 98' 9"
Clothing storeroom, 29' 6" x 60' 2"
Clothing storeroom, 29' 6" x 28' 5"
Subsistence storeroom, 29' 6" x 26' 9"
Subsistence storeroom, 29' 6" x 72'

Some of the physical changes made on the exterior of the building consist of the addition of a firewall which projects above the roof at the midway point; an entrance bricked in and a window converted to a door on the south side; another window converted to two windows on the same side; and removal of a loading platform from the south side. On the north side three windows were bricked in, one doorway was shortened to window size, and a window shortened. Likewise, the platform once on the north side was removed. At the east end, a gabled frame enclosure was erected around the basement entry, while on the west end the door pediment has been removed. In 1987 the structure was in fair condition.(42)

42. Cards for Building No. 137. "Historical Record of Buildings." NA, RG 77, Box No. 51. Plan, "Q.M. and Sub. Storehouse," No. 91D, November 23, 1899. 4 sheets. NA, RG 77. Cartographic Archives Division; Field survey notes, February 20-22, 1987.